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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: US TAIWAN POLICY AND TAIWAN REFERENDUM ON
UN BID

¶1. Summary: News coverage in Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies October 20-22 ranged over a variety of topics, including Taiwan's arms and alleged nuclear arms development, US arms sales to Taiwan, and the dispute between the Taipei city government and the central government over a torch relay to promote the DPP-proposed UN bid referendum.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said the majority people in Taiwan do not accept the "one-China" precondition set by Beijing. Commenting on the Taiwan government's moves to promote the referendum on seeking UN membership under the name of Taiwan, both the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" and the pro-unification "United Daily News" criticized the ruling DPP in their editorials of depriving Taiwan voters of their right to freedom of expression. End summary.

A) "Far More Than 'Part' of the People of Taiwan Cannot Accept China's Precondition"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (10/22):

"US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Thomas J. Christensen said in a recent interview with the Singapore-based 'Lianhe Zaobao': We have noticed that part of the Taiwan people cannot accept [China's] precondition [that is, the 'one-China' principle]. We hope the two sides can find ways to resolve their differences. He added that Beijing should start a dialogue with Taiwan's elected leaders.

"... Christensen's remarks are worthy of much attention, for they mean that the US government has realized that, after nearly 20 years of democratic reform, the national identification expressed by the people of Taiwan when they are able freely to show their will is entirely different from what was said in the 1972 'Shanghai Communiqué': 'The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China.'

"What the United States acknowledged in the 'Shanghai Communiqué' is, in fact, the understanding of two Chinese figures, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek, and has nothing to do with the people of Taiwan. This phenomenon surfaced naturally when the outsider KMT regime ended. In fact, the change of ruling parties in 2000 and the repeat victory of the native regime have all demonstrated that those who cannot accept the so-called one-China principle account for not only 'a part' as described by Christensen, but a majority and even the vast majority of the people of Taiwan.

"... Therefore, although Christensen's remarks are to be applauded, the US government should see from the trends of Taiwan's transfer of political power, the fast-growing Taiwan national identity, and the fact that the bid for UN membership as a sovereign nation has become

mainstream public opinion in Taiwan, that the fictitious 'one-China principle' is only a synonym for China's hegemonic expansion. And the U.S.' China-biased 'one-China policy' should be changed, as suggested by many Congressional members and US think tanks, starting with the recognition of Taiwan's sovereign status."

B) "Watch Out! People's Right to Express Opinions Is Being Abridged"

The KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] said in an editorial (10/22):

"... By the same token, changing the arrangement into issuing and casting the presidential and the referendum ballots at the same time also abridges people's right to express their opinions. The presidential election and the referendum are by nature two entirely different voting behaviors. Voters can choose to vote or not to vote in both, or to vote only in the presidential election and not to cast the referendum ballot, and of course to vote only on the referendum. How to choose is the right of a citizen, as he expresses his desire whether to exercise this voting right. That is why the original design separates the issuing and casting of the two ballots into two phases. Forcing the two phases into one would deprive [voters of] this minimal right to choose.

"... In order effectively to tie in the referendum with the presidential election, the ruling authorities have long been disregarding laws and regulations. The ruling party ignores any criticism or appeal. It is unlikely that the Central Election Committee will resist political pressure and independently exercise its power. We can only make the last appeal here: no matter how important the 'referendum on UN membership' is, it does not mean one can do anything one likes. To combine the presidential election and the referendum into one phase to deprive the people of their constitutional right to free expression. It is a practice that UN BID

seriously violates human rights protected by the constitution."

C) "Seriously Deal with the Government's Violations of Laws and the Constitution in Promoting UN Bid Referendum"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (10/20):

"... The DPP government's promoting the 'UN bid referendum' is going too far, without any concern for violating the Constitution or the law. As the authorities using every public resource and means to promote the referendum, there is already prosecutors' opinion that 'if suspected of violating Section 13 of the Referendum Law,' any such move shall be investigated. The reason is that the 'referendum' is a direct civil right. It is different from the executive and legislative powers. If the executive branch can use government money and employees to promote a 'referendum' at will, then the whole constitutional system will collapse.

"In addition to violating the law, the DPP government, taking advantage of its ruling power, has been forcing government employees to accept quotas for referendum endorsements. This is also a violation of the Constitution. For the Constitution gives people the right to free expression; the government shall not use any means to force, intimidate or induce the people to express certain opinions. ..."

"The authorities openly instruct the post office to stamp a mark with Taiwan's UN bid slogan on private letters sent overseas, believing it is helpful for international communication. However, this also obviously violates the constitutional right to freedom expression. ..."

YOUNG